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9 May 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

SUBJECT: Survey of Opinion Regarding the One-Grade
Promotion Policy

1. Personnel of this office have discussed with representatives of the offices of the DDI and the DDS the impact of the one-grade promotion policy. These discussions have been handled on a completely informal basis. Individuals whose opinions are expressed here represent for the most part administration officers and operating supervisors at the middle management level.

2. It is apparent that the one-grade promotion policy had a greater impact in the offices of the DDI than it did in those of the DDS. This is occasioned in all probability by the fact that the DDI, because of its relative stability of staffing patterns, has long operated on the basis of filling its positions with personnel at the grade allocated. For example, one employee of a DDI office is quoted as follows: "Our T/O doesn't provide for GS-8 or GS-10 positions. Therefore, why should such grades be required?" Almost all of the representatives of the offices in both the DDI and the DDS commented on two factors: (a) the effect of this policy upon employee morale and (b) the effect of the policy upon rate of advancement.

3. A representative of one DDI office states, "This office deals largely with other governmental outfits in which professional employees are given opportunity for promotion two grades at a time. ✓ The new system is hard on employees of this organization." (GS-7 to 9 to 11) X

4. Another DDI ^{supervisor} office reports, "The 'starch' and pleasure has been taken out of promotions"; and another, "The one-grade promotion system has greatly affected the morale of some of our promising, high-caliber young professionals." why?

5. In terms of the effect of the policy on recruitment, one office states, "Since other offices have not adopted a one-grade promotion system, it is difficult to convince a prospective recruit who is knowledgeable of government structure that progress within this Agency compares favorably with that realized elsewhere." ^{supervisor}

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6. Inasmuch as this last remark was supported by the opinions of a number of people, we queried our recruiters as to their experience with prospective applicants. The report was generally that no significant effect has been noticed in the recruitment of applicants. With one exception, the recruiters state that they have lost no candidates on account of one-grade promotions. [REDACTED] however, reports that he has interviewed a number of men who are aware of Federal pay practices and that these men have been disappointed by our policy and have not filed application. [REDACTED] feels that we may be at a disadvantage in competing with such as NSA, AEC, NASA, and the civilian units of Defense, which promise promotion from GS-5 to GS-7 in one year.

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7. Only one office, and this in the DDI, has reported improved morale: "This has improved morale because the one-grade promotions are accomplished much sooner (to the benefit of the employee) and they attain the ultimate grade level objective at approximately the same time."

evidence
of non
compliance
with slow
down policy

8. A number of offices in the DDI and DDS considered morale in terms of "professional" versus "clerical" grade levels: "Our employees are used to thinking of 'professional' grades at the 7, 9, and 11 levels and thinking of 6, 8, and 10 as more like 'clerical' levels." In terms of morale, there were actually only four offices where no dissatisfaction with the policy was expressed (OTR, Communications, Cable Secretariat, and the Comptroller).

9. Most of the offices in the DDI and a couple in the DDS felt that the inception of this policy was designed to decelerate promotion rates. For example, "Our office is generally not in favor of the new system." The feelings of the individuals in this office with whom the program was discussed is that the policy defeats its own purpose. Since the waiting period is no longer a strong consideration, it is the practice of this office to promote a GS-9 to GS-10 in approximately six months. In another six months the case is presented to the Board and is approved for promotion to GS-11. This permits the employee to enjoy the one-grade promotion six months before he would otherwise receive a two-grade promotion. Administrative personnel in this office feel that the work, time and expense have doubled since the two promotions require two Board actions and the preparation and processing of twice the former amount of paper work. This "doubling of paper work" was brought up in conversations held with members of other offices.

10. Quite a different thought was expressed by one administrative officer in the DDI, "This program needlessly infuriated many employees, including those at the supervisory level. Further, the program accelerated

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the promotion of mediocrity because it is ^{more} ~~now~~ difficult to explain adequately to a mediocre employee why he should not be promoted one grade than it was to explain to an excellent employee why he should mature more fully in an assignment before expecting promotion of two grades."

11. With regard to promotion rates, a large office of the DDI indicated that its staff chiefs unanimously felt that the one-grade promotion system was not a good thing. The feeling was expressed that the program has not accomplished the deceleration of promotions generally expected; advancing personnel to intermediate grades has increased the costs by the period of time spent at the increased salary level during the period employees would normally be waiting out the two-grade advance.

12. The opinion was expressed by employees of two different DDI offices that they believed the one-grade promotion ruling was designed to alleviate imbalance in the upper grades in only one or two areas of the Agency. They expressed some concern that because of this, the policy was applied to other areas of the organization where it had little application to the needs of those areas.

13. We also discussed the effect of this policy with exit interviewers of the Employee Relations Branch. During the first several months following announcement of the program, a number of resigning employees expressed dissatisfaction with the new policy as a reason for leaving. However, for the past several months there has been practically no mention of the program at all by departing employees.

14. In summation: General dissatisfaction with the policy was expressed by those persons at the working level with whom discussions were held. The opinions expressed were concerned primarily with the effect on morale and, of secondary concern, the failure of the policy to achieve what is believed to be the purpose of the program: deceleration of a rapid promotion rate. Almost all of the individuals who felt that the policy had not achieved this purpose expressed the opinion that a more desirable policy would simply extend the time-in-grade requirements for professional personnel.

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Chief, Personnel Operations Division

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